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A-ONE Online Magazine
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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-* EU Parliament Rejects ACTA!! *-
-* Malware May Take Thousands Off Web! *-
-* Olympic Experts Can Repel Any Cyber Threats *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard

"Saying it like it is!"

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A belated Happy Independence Day!! The 4th of July holiday is over, but the fireworks continue, in many ways. As usual, we had a nice, quiet cookout here - just the two of us along with the canine "kids". Hey, they're family, so we have to included them, albeit within limits. We're hoping that you also had an enjoyable and safe holiday!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GAME COMPETITION RECREATES NINTENDO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Retro Game Championship Recreates Nintendo's Famous 1990 Game Competition in Las Vegas August 11th and 12th 2012

Nintendo's two most famous video game competitions, Nintendo World Championship and Nintendo Campus Challenge, are being recreated in Las Vegas at the Classic Gaming Expo this summer.

Gamer's will compete to get the highest combined score on reproduction cartridges of the two holy grails of video game collecting.

I have great memories of World Championship and Campus Challenge. Competing in them again will be a great experience for many gamers. says Sean Kelly, organizer of the Classic Game Expo.

The competition is free to all attendees of the expo. Each competitor will play both games and the highest combined scores will win prizes including trophies and t-shirts, not to mention eternal gaming glory.

The Retro Game Championship is organized by PriceCharting.com, a source for pricing data for video game and movie collectors, and JJGames.com, a

retailer of retro games and systems for all major consoles.

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - Xbox 8' Name of Next-Gen Microsoft Gaming Console?

"~~~~~" New Slimmer PlayStation 3 in the Works!
Developer Hacks Raspberry Pi!
And more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

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Xbox 8' Tipped as Name of Next-Gen Microsoft Gaming Console

Microsoft's next-generation gaming console may be called Xbox 8, or perhaps Xbox Infinity, according to a recent report. The software giant recently secured a slew of Xbox-related domains from a Chinese cybersquatter through the National Arbitration Forum, a company that handles international domain disputes, Fusible reported. The disputed names include XboxPhone.com, XboxTablet.com, XboxLiveTV.com, XboxCompanion.com, Xbox8.us and Xbox8.org. Microsoft also has pending cases against the owners of Xboxliverewards.com, Xboxsports.com, Xboxsmartglass.com, and Xboxmusic.com.

The Redmond-based company's next-generation gaming console was previously thought to be called Xbox 720, following the naming scheme of its predecessor. The recent domain acquisitions have increased speculation that Microsoft may veer away from its previous naming scheme, however.

The next-generation console will reportedly be six times more powerful than the current Xbox 360, and may support Blu-ray, true 1080p and native 3D output. The system will supposedly feature six to eight 2GHz ARM/x86 cores, with two additional ARM/x86 cores that would power the console's operating system and three PowerPC cores for backward-compatibility.

Microsoft will reportedly release the next-gen Xbox ahead of the holidays in 2013.

New Slimmer PlayStation 3 in the Works, FCC Docs Suggest

EuroGamer on Thursday pointed out some documents from the Federal

Communications Commission's website showing diagrams of what may be the long-rumored super-slim rendition of the PlayStation 3. The documents in question refer to the a CECH-4001x PlayStation model, which Eurogamer says could relate to a slimmer PS3? that the publication has heard will be announced at German game show Gamescom next month. With the next-generation PlayStation 4 not due to be released until late 2013, Eurogamer speculates that the super-slim PS3 may be Sony's way of breathing some new life into its six-year-old console to appeal to late adopters.

Developer Hacks Raspberry Pi To Play Super Nintendo Games

A small, ugly computer playing old, primitive video games normally wouldn't be news. But most small, ugly computers aren't nearly as cool as the Raspberry Pi, the credit card-sized Linux computer that's being sold for just \$35 by the Raspberry Pi Foundation. And now, petRockBlog founder Florian has made the Raspberry Pi even cooler by creating an adapter for the mini-computer that's capable of playing old-school 16-bit and 8-bit Nintendo games. In his blog post describing his project, Florian lists several key tasks he had to perform to make the Pi SNES-ready, such as creating a hardware controller interface, building a case that can contain the Pi and connect to traditional SNES controllers, and building a launch menu from scratch that lets users choose the games they want to play.

The developer posted a video of himself playing the immortal Mario Kart on the Pi, although it would have been nice if he'd shown video of Street Fighter II and Chrono Trigger as well. Ah, memories

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Olympic Experts Sure They Can Repel Cyber Threats

Vital computer systems for London's 2012 Olympic Games have come under repeated cyber-attacks but only from hackers who were invited to join in thousands of hours of security tests.

Atos, the lead technology company for the Summer and Winter Games since 2002, said Tuesday it had carried out more than 200,000 hours of testing, including mounting simulated attacks. It's all aimed at protecting the systems that will deliver results to Olympic venue scoreboards, event timetables to athletes, and Olympic accreditation information to British border officials.

The company is responsible for about 11,500 computers and servers at locations across Britain. Starting next week, it will run its Olympic Technology Operations Center based in Canary Wharf, close to the Olympic

stadium around the clock, monitoring possible cyber threats second by second.

Michele Hyron, the company's chief integrator, said to help test its defenses Atos had drafted in so-called "ethical hackers" specialists capable of mounting sophisticated attacks who use their knowledge to test systems rather than disable them.

"We are using ethical hackers for that, we are using external companies, we are using people from our own company who are specialized in that kind of activity," she said. "We are preparing ourselves in terms of testing to cover all the kind of threats to the Olympic Games."

She spoke at the technology center, where banks of experts were lined up in long rows according to their individual expertise.

A quarter of the London Olympic organizing committee's overall budget of \$3.1 billion has been spent on technology. Atos is expecting to handle 2 million pieces of key data throughout the event 30 percent more than at the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

In Beijing, experts encountered about 12 million potential cyber security problems each day. Hyron said Atos expects to see between 12 and 14 million events per day during the London Games, though only about 20 a day will be categorized as formal incidents actions that require investigation.

"Our role is to do monitoring in real time and within milliseconds block any line that is showing abnormal behavior then it's a problem for police or law enforcement to work out if that is an attack or not," said Patrick Adiba, executive vice president at Atos for the Olympic Games and major events.

For hackers, a gold medal attack would be to light up Olympic scoreboards with politically-motivated messages, a feat Adiba says would be almost impossible to achieve.

"It is very unlikely, as it all operates on a very secure network. It would be quite complicated to get into this network without being detected," he said. "It can never be 100 percent, but it is close to 100 percent."

Adiba insists the threat from cyber-attacks to the overall running of the games can be managed.

"For us, if some of our staff get food poisoning the day before the competition, it's a bigger threat than a cyber-attack, because you don't have the people to operate systems," he said.

However, Britain's minister responsible for cyber terrorism, Francis Maude, warned in May that the Olympics would "not be immune to cyber-attacks by those who would seek to disrupt the Games."

So far, concern has focused mainly on online fraud related to ticket sales. Britain, however, has said it is also wary of the threat from "hacktivist" groups mounting attacks to highlight particular political or social causes.

U.S. authorities noted last winter that Iranian hackers defaced the website of Azerbaijan's National Olympic Committee, posting anti-Israeli

comments.

Malware May Knock Thousands Off Internet on Monday

Despite repeated alerts, tens of thousands of Americans may still lose their Internet service Monday unless they do a quick check of their computers for malware that could have taken over their machines more than a year ago.

The warnings about the Internet problem have been splashed across Facebook and Google. Internet service providers have sent notices, and the FBI set up a special website.

According to the FBI, the number of computers that probably are infected is more than 277,000 worldwide, down from about 360,000 in April. About 64,000 still-infected computers are probably in the United States.

The Canadian Internet Registration Authority said about 25,000 of the computers initially affected by the malware were in Canada, but now only about 7,000 machines remain infected there, according to Canadian Internet Registration Authority spokesman Mark Buell.

He said his organization, together with Public Safety Canada and the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission, has developed an online site where computer users can check their computers for the malware.

People whose computers are still infected Monday will lose their ability to go online, and they will have to call their service providers for help deleting the malware and reconnecting to the Internet.

The problem began when international hackers ran an online advertising scam to take control of more than 570,000 infected computers around the world. When the FBI went in to take down the hackers late last year, agents realized that if they turned off the malicious servers being used to control the computers, all the victims would lose their Internet service.

In a highly unusual move, the FBI set up a safety net. They brought in a private company to install two clean Internet servers to take over for the malicious servers so that people would not suddenly lose their Internet.

And while it was the first time they'd done something like that, FBI officials acknowledged that it may not be the last, since authorities are taking on more of these types of investigations.

The temporary Internet system they set up, however, will be shut down at 12:01 a.m. EDT Monday, July 9.

Most victims don't even know their computers have been infected, although the malicious software probably has slowed their online surfing and disabled their antivirus software, making their machines more vulnerable to other problems.

But popular social networking sites and Internet providers have gotten more involved, reaching out to computer users to warn of the problem.

According to Tom Grasso, an FBI supervisory special agent, many Internet providers are ready for the problem and have plans to try to help their customers. Some, such as Comcast, already have reached out.

The company sent out notices and posted information on its website. Because the company can tell whether there is a problem with a customer's Internet server, Comcast sent an email, letter or Internet notice to customers whose computers appeared to be affected.

Grasso said other Internet providers may come up with technical solutions that they will put in place Monday that will either correct the problem or provide information to customers when they call to say their Internet isn't working. If the Internet providers correct the server problem, the Internet will work, but the malware will remain on victims' computers and could pose future problems.

In addition to individual computer owners, about 50 Fortune 500 companies are still infected, Grasso said.

Both Facebook and Google created their own warning messages that showed up if someone using either site appeared to have an infected computer. Facebook users would get a message that says, "Your computer or network might be infected," along with a link that users can click for more information.

Google users got a similar message, displayed at the top of a Google search results page. It also provides information on correcting the problem.

To check whether a computer is infected, users can visit a website run by the group brought in by the FBI: <http://www.dcwg.org> .

The site includes links to respected commercial sites that will run a quick check on the computer, and it also lays out detailed instructions if users want to actually check the computer themselves.

EU Parliament Rejects ACTA Anti-Piracy Treaty

The European Parliament overwhelmingly defeated an international anti-piracy trade agreement Wednesday after concern that it would limit Internet freedom sparked street protests in cities across Europe.

The vote 39 in favor, 478 against, with 165 abstentions appeared to deal the death blow to the European Union's participation in a treaty it helped negotiate, though other countries may still participate without the EU.

Supporters had maintained that ACTA, the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement, was needed to standardize the different national laws that protect the rights of those who produce music, movies, pharmaceuticals, fashion goods and other products that often fall victim to piracy and intellectual property theft. EU officials said, too, that protecting European ideas was essential to the economic growth the continent so badly needs.

But opponents feared the treaty would lead to censorship and snooping on the Internet activities of ordinary citizens. Alex Wilks, who directed the

anti-ACTA campaign for the advocacy group Avaaz, said the agreement would have permitted private companies to spy on the activities of Internet users and would have allowed users to be disconnected without due process.

Wilks said the agreement did not properly balance the rights of private citizens and those of copyright holders, whom he described as companies, though their ranks also include individual authors and musicians of modest means.

Beyond the EU and 22 of its member countries, eight other countries also signed the agreement — the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand, Singapore, and South Korea — though none has yet ratified it. The EU vote will not affect them.

David Martin, a member of the European Parliament from Scotland, pronounced the agreement dead.

"No emergency surgery, no transplant, no long period of recuperation is going to save ACTA," Martin said. "It's time to give it its last rites. It's time to allow its friends to mourn and for the rest of us to get on with our lives."

But EU Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht did not sound ready to give up altogether. He said in a statement that he would push ahead with his plan to have Europe's highest court determine whether the agreement, as currently written, would curtail any fundamental European rights, and would consider his next move in light of that opinion.

"It's clear that the question of protecting intellectual property does need to be addressed on a global scale — for business, the creative industries, whether in Europe or our partner countries," De Gucht said. "With the rejection of ACTA, the need to protect the backbone of Europe's economy across the globe: our innovation, our creativity, our ideas — our intellectual property — does not disappear."

But the overwhelming vote Wednesday seemed to indicate that the agreement in its current form has no chance to be approved.

The treaty was unanimously approved by the 27 EU heads of government in December. But EU efforts to ratify it ran into trouble almost immediately. For the EU to become a party to the treaty, all 27 member countries would have to formally approve it.

Protests erupted on the streets of several European cities. A petition by Avaaz in opposition to ACTA garnered 2.8 million signatures and played an important role in influencing the debate.

It began to look increasingly unlikely that all 27 countries would ratify the agreement, so much so that in February the European Commission, the EU's executive branch, suspended ratification efforts and instead asked the European Court of Justice to render its opinion. The hope clearly was to stall for time and try to resume ratification efforts, armed with a favorable court opinion, in a calmer atmosphere.

As if to underscore the difficulty in getting the agreement ratified by all 27 EU countries — even had the Parliament given its approval — France's governing Socialist Party issued a statement Wednesday crowing about the parliamentary rejection of the treaty.

"Today, the European Parliament has buried once and for all the ACTA

treaty," the statement said. "For the French Socialists, the vote marks the first and foremost a new inter-institutional balance of power, with the active participation of citizens in the European debate."

But copyright holders were, as Martin said, mourning the treaty's demise. A release on behalf of Europe's "creative industries," saying it represented 130 trade federations representing sectors employing over 120 million workers, bemoaned Wednesday's vote, saying it would damage Europe's economy.

"The decision on ACTA is a missed opportunity for the EU to protect its creative and innovation-based industries in the international market place," the statement said. "Intellectual property rights remain the engine for Europe's global competitiveness and a driver of economic growth and jobs. In the current economic climate, it is particularly crucial to protect these beyond the EU itself."

Alan C. Drewsen, executive director of the International Trademark Association, was particularly critical.

"Europe could have seized the chance to support an important treaty that improved intellectual property standards internationally," Drewsen said. "We expect that ACTA will move ahead without the EU, which is a significant loss for the 27 member states."

The failure to ratify the treaty is a humiliation for the European Union, which was one of the prime movers in the multi-year effort to negotiate the agreement. EU officials had maintained that ACTA would change nothing in European law, but would be simply an instance of the EU leading by example and exporting its strong copyright protection laws to other countries where safeguards are weaker.

Oracle Loses to UsedSoft in Software Resale Case

Customers of software resellers such as UsedSoft who buy an updated user licence may download the software from the copyright owner's website, the Court of Justice of the EU ruled today.

Europe's highest court was ruling in a dispute between Oracle and UsedSoft, a German business that offers its clients licences acquired from customers of Oracle.

UsedSoft clients that do not already possess the software download it from Oracle's website after acquiring a so-called used licence. Clients who already have the software can buy another licence for additional users or to receive software updates. They then download the software to the main memory of the computers of those new users.

Oracle objected to the resale practice and asked the German courts to order UsedSoft to stop. Germany's Federal Court of Justice asked the Court of Justice of the EU to interpret the directive on the legal protection of computer programs.

Now the Court has ruled that an author of software cannot prevent the resale of a pre-used licence allowing the use of his programs to be downloaded from the internet. In particular, it said that the exclusive right of distribution of a copy of a computer program covered by the

licence is exhausted on its first sale.

Oracle had argued that the principle of exhaustion set out in the directive does not apply to user licences for computer programs downloaded online. But the Court held that the exhaustion principle does not only apply to copies of the software on CD-ROMs or DVDs, but also to downloads.

By selling the software - in whatever form - the copyright owner exhausts his exclusive distribution right. Even if the licence agreement bans a further transfer, the IP owner cannot oppose the resale of the copy or to copies of the program that are later updated by the software author.

Conor Ward, partner at Hogan Lovells, said that the finding by the Court that the supplier's ability to control the distribution of software downloads is exhausted will surprise some commentators who thought that the Court would follow the earlier opinion of the Advocate General.

"The decision has the potential of having pretty profound effects on the software industry," Ward said. "At present many corporates have a surplus of software licences, reflecting the fact that they have reduced staffing levels and the possibility of getting some cash by selling their surplus will clearly be attractive. It is likely that a market for pre-used software licences could develop fairly rapidly."

But software companies such as Oracle can take some comfort from the Court's ruling. The judges decided that if Oracle's customers buy a licence that allows them to provide the software to more users than need it, the customer cannot then divide the licence and resell only part of it.

In addition, any Oracle customer that sells his licence must then make the software downloaded onto his own computer unusable. The Court said that unlike the exclusive right of distribution, the exclusive right of reproduction is not exhausted by the first sale.

Facebook, Yahoo Settle Patent Fight

WORKING IT OUT: Facebook and Yahoo have settled their months-long patent dispute, averting a potentially lengthy battle over the technology running two of the Internet's most popular destinations.

NEW DEAL: In dropping the lawsuits, the companies agreed to license their patents to each other. They also formed an advertising alliance that expands their existing partnership. No money will exchange hands in the settlement.

FRIENDS? The advertising deal could help Yahoo recover some revenue that it has lost as marketers shift more spending to a larger and more engaged audience on Facebook's online social network. Facebook, in turn, gets to show ads tailored to its 900 million users in other heavily trafficked areas besides its own website.

Peru's distribution of more than 800,000 low-cost laptop computers to children across the country easily ranks as one of the world's most ambitious efforts to leverage digital technology in the fight against poverty.

Yet five years into the program, there are serious doubts about whether the largest single deployment in the One Laptop Per Child initiative was worth the more than \$200 million that Peru's government spent.

Ill-prepared rural teachers were often unable to fathom, much less teach with the machines, software bugs didn't get fixed and most had no way to connect to the Internet. Many could not take the computers home as the initiative intended. And some schools even lacked electricity to keep them running.

"In essence, what we did was deliver the computers without preparing the teachers," said Sandro Marcone, the Peruvian education official who now runs the program.

The volume of low-cost, education-focused computers delivered globally remains modest. Intel Corp. says it has shipped more than 7 million, about a third in Argentina. Venezuela boasts 1.6 million distributed, licensed from a Portuguese company.

MIT Media Lab founder Nicholas Negroponte inspired the One Laptop Per Child initiative, pioneering the idea that computers could be potent tools for lifting developing world children out of poverty. It was never able to achieve the \$100 laptop price tag he desired, but nevertheless won adherents.

More than 2.5 million of its \$200 XO laptops green-and-white models for the early grades and blue-and-white machines with bigger keyboards for older kids have been distributed in 46 countries since 2007.

The rugged, energy-efficient OLPC laptops, which run a variant of the open-source Linux operating system, are in Ethiopia, in Rwanda, Mongolia and Haiti, even in the United States and Australia. Uruguay, a compact South American nation of 3.5 million people, is the only country that has fully embraced the concept and given every elementary school child and teacher an XO laptop.

No country, however, bought nearly as many as Peru.

"It's a really great idea," said Jeff Patzer, a software engineer with a degree from the University of California, Berkeley, who traveled from school to school in Peru's rustic Cordillera Blanca highlands in 2010 introducing and maintaining the laptops. "It just seems like there was some stuff that wasn't thought through quite enough."

Inter-American Development Bank researchers were less polite.

"There is little solid evidence regarding the effectiveness of this program," they said in a study based on a look at 319 schools in small, rural Peruvian communities that got laptops.

"The magical thinking that mere technology is enough to spur change, to improve learning, is what this study categorically disproves," co-author Eugenio Severin of Chile told The Associated Press.

The study found no increased math or language skills, no improvement in classroom instruction quality, no boost in time spent on homework, no improvement in reading habits.

On the positive side, the "dramatic increase in access to computers" accelerated by about six months students' abstract reasoning, verbal fluency and speed in processing information, the report said.

A study in Ethiopian schools by Dutch researchers from the University of Groningen, published last year in the journal Computers and Education, similarly indicated that OLPC laptops improved abstract reasoning.

The teachers in those schools had received extensive training in the laptops, which the researchers said introduced an "information-rich novelty" into an environment previously starved for learning material.

The laptops in Ethiopia, like those in Peru, were loaded with books, memory games, music composing software and other programs.

The Education Ministry official who ran Peru's program until last year, Oscar Becerra, calls the abstract reasoning findings "spectacular" and disputes claims that the program has been a failure.

"We knew from the start that it wouldn't be possible to improve the teachers," he said, citing a 2007 census of 180,000 Peruvian teachers that showed more than 90 percent lacked basic math skills while three in five could not read above sixth-grade level.

Many of the teachers had never so much as booted up a computer. In Patzer's experience "most of them barely knew how to interact with the computers at all."

At the Jose Arguedas primary school in Lima's gritty San Juan de Lurigancho neighborhood, 40 computers for its 570 students arrived nearly two years ago but few teachers have worked them into their lesson plans.

"It's been difficult for many teachers to adapt to them," said Graciela Martinez, the school's technology coordinator.

Many of teacher Magnus Fajardo's second-graders struggled when he took them to computer lab and asked them to write, sequentially, the numbers from 200 to 300 on their laptops.

The children knew their numbers but few knew their laptops. Less bashful children asked a visiting reporter for help. They wanted to know how to advance to a new line, how to increase the font size.

In the higher grades, Martinez said, children's use of the machines is mostly social. They have Internet, and Facebook is big. So are online games.

"For them, the laptop is more for playing than for learning," she says.

Educators say that's a clear sign the children haven't been properly introduced either to the Internet or to what is on the machines.

Negroponte thinks the main goal should be simply getting computers into poor kids' hands. Last year he proposed parachuting table computers from helicopters and he has begun a pilot project in two Ethiopian villages to test whether tablets alone, loaded with the right software, can teach

children to read.

"There are about 100 million kids without schools, without access to literate adults, and I would like to explore a way to get tablets to them in a manner that does not need "educators" to go to the village," he said via email.

The OLPC team always considered Internet connectivity part of the recipe for success. They also insisted each child be given a laptop and be permitted to take it home.

Uruguay, a small, flat country with a far higher standard of living, has honored those requirements and achieved ubiquitous Internet access in the process.

Peru did not.

Becerra said trade-offs were necessary because it would have cost \$1.2 billion to provide all 6 million children in Peru's elementary schools with laptops. Rural schools, beginning with those where a single teacher manages multiple grades, got priority.

But those schools' very remoteness complicated matters.

Some parents, mistakenly believing themselves the laptops' owners, tried to sell the machines, Becerra said.

About a quarter didn't want the computers coming home, fearing theft, the development bank researchers found. Meanwhile, two in five children didn't take their computers home because their school wouldn't let them.

Some schools didn't have enough electricity to power the machines.

And then there was Internet. Less than 1 percent of the schools studied had it.

Patzer blogged about the frustration he witnessed when children and teachers struggled with the laptops' old, buggy software and, not understanding how to update to improved versions, "promptly boxed them up and put them back in the corner."

Marcone questioned whether the IADB study measured the right aptitudes among those who did use the machines.

"What was evaluated was a paper and pencil test," he said. "What if they had tested 21st-century skills?" he said. Skills such as those developed by the audiovisual tools the laptops possess?

Marcone has already made modifications to the program, including making the XO laptop part of Peru's university teacher-training curriculum this year.

His office will continue to support the laptops, replacing broken ones as well as distributing 41,000 that were destroyed in a warehouse fire earlier this year. It plans to expand rural Internet penetration and put new support resources online. But it won't be trying to give out one laptop per child.

"The ministry is not going to do another macro project of this type. It is not going to make multimillion-dollar purchases and distribute (computers) like candy."

Meet The New Spray-On Battery That Comes in a Can

Scientific American reports that a team of scientists from Rice University in Houston and the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium have been working on a spray-on battery that's deployed through an aerosol can. Although the idea has a vague They called me mad, mad! sound to it, Scientific American says that the invention could conceivably transform any surface into a potential energy storage device. The magazine says the spray is layered like most batteries with a positive current collector, a cathode that attracts positively charged ions, an ion-conducting separator, an anode to attract negative ions, and a negative current collector. Team member Neelam Singh says that the technology he's helping to develop could even lead to paint-on solar cells that could transform entire houses into solar-energy capture-and-storage devices.

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